



*Atlantic Richfield Company*

## **Rico Cleanup Bulletin No. 4**

*September 18, 1996*

The **Rico Cleanup Bulletin** is periodically published by **Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO)** to keep Rico residents and property owners, as well as other interested parties, fully informed about its voluntary environmental cleanup activities in the Rico area.

### **Bulletin No. 4 Highlights**

- Rico voluntary cleanup project 60% completed.
- ARCO and State of Colorado continue to study community soils data.
- School of Mines study of St. Louis Tunnel discharge completed - report to be provided to State of Colorado and Rico officials.
- ARCO to host community appreciation barbecue on September 28th.

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## **ARCO and Colorado's Voluntary Cleanup Program**

ARCO is working closely with property owners, the Town of Rico and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment on a voluntary program to stabilize and clean up a number of mining-related sites in the Rico area. Like many Western communities, Rico's legacy of a robust mining history is the accumulation of mine wastes that contain concentrations of natural occurring metals.

In 1994, the Colorado Legislature enacted the Colorado Voluntary Cleanup and Redevelopment Act, which encourages

parties to voluntarily remediate waste sites for which they may have some responsibility. Through its predecessor, Anaconda Minerals Company, ARCO previously had limited involvement in the Rico area and therefore, is participating in Colorado's voluntary program.

The voluntary program can be beneficial for all concerned by resulting in a technically sound, cost-effective cleanup, without the stigma on the community of "Superfund" designation by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

## **ARCO and State of Colorado Continuing to Study Community Soils**

ARCO and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPH&E) continue to analyze "community soils" as part of ARCO's voluntary cleanup process. Last year ARCO conducted extensive sampling and mapping of community soils in Rico - that is soil material located throughout the community which may have elevated concentrations of heavy metals. ARCO issued a preliminary report as part of it's Grand View Smelter application for a voluntary cleanup permit. It is available for public inspection at the Rico Town Hall.

The report not only dealt with concentrations of metals in the soil - but also whether deposition of the materials was the result of nature or of mining activities. Based on these studies, ARCO reached the conclusion that the lead content of soils varies throughout Rico but is in line with what has been found in other historic mining communities where lead-related health problems have not occurred. Thus, ARCO determined that lead-related health risks in Rico are minimal. The study also concluded that the overwhelming majority of situations of elevated lead levels resulted from naturally

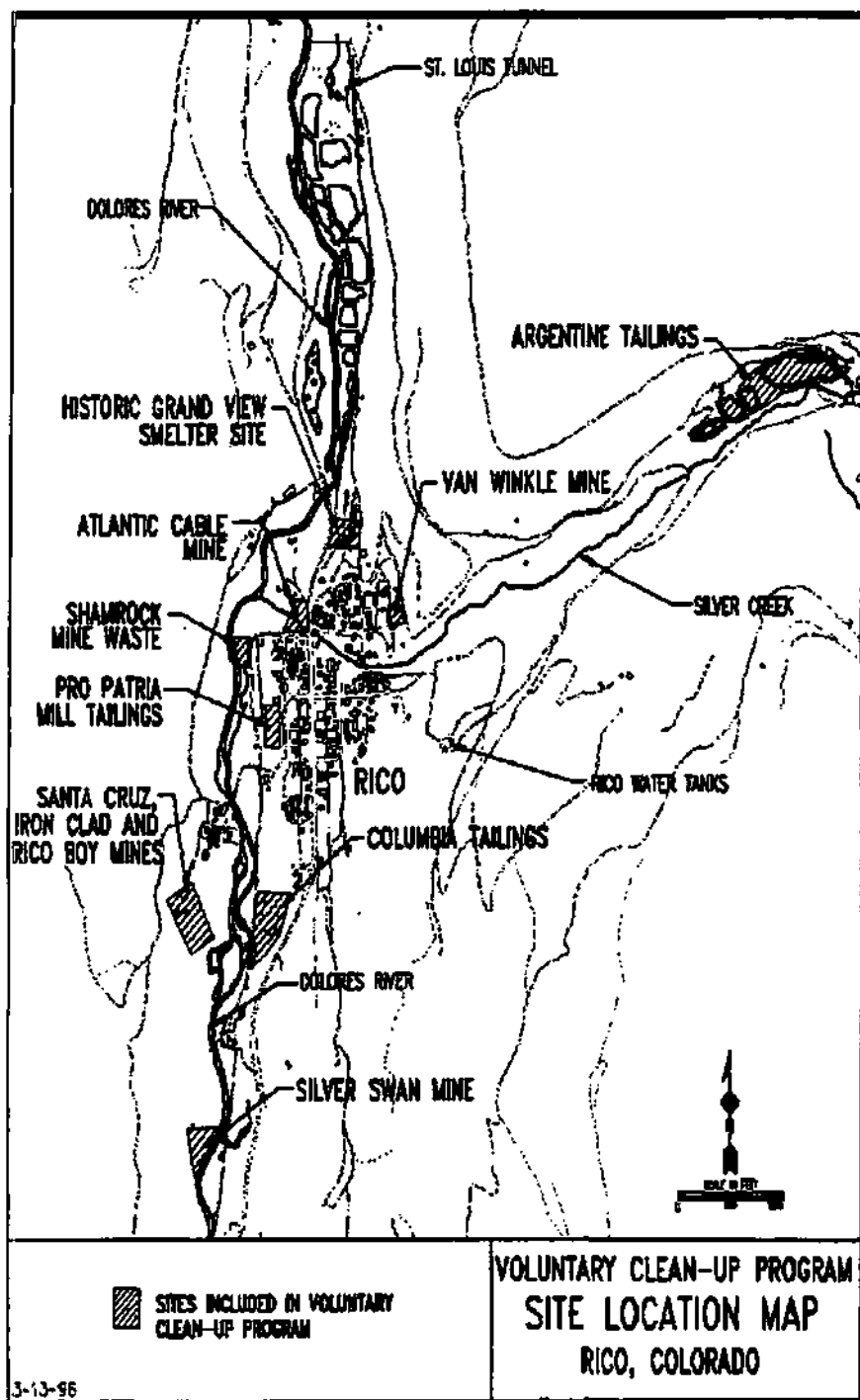
occurring metals - not mining activities.

Since this work is the most extensive analysis of community soils in Rico, the data are being further evaluated by a joint ARCO-CDPH&E task force. For the purposes of collaboration, the joint effort has included additional field sampling and laboratory analysis. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has also been a formal observer to the discussions. When the team completes its work in October, the results will be provided to the Town of Rico.

## Rico Cleanup Project 60% Completed

ARCO's voluntary cleanup of mine waste areas in and around the Town of Rico has progressed very well this Summer. At this point the project is estimated to be 60% complete. The contractor, Nielsons, Inc. of Cortez, is on a 50 hour/week work schedule in order for the project to be completed by late October.

Work at five primary sites, as well as smaller waste sites within Rico, has consisted of removing and stabilizing waste materials containing concentrations of heavy metals, so as to limit human exposure to them. This is particularly important in the case of mine waste found in contact with area streams and the Dolores River, where ARCO's remediation work is designed to halt the continual erosion of material into the waterways.



### Individual Site Progress:

#### **Argentine Tailings Site**

Mine tailings have been stabilized and the site recontoured. Remaining work includes the reseeding of disturbed areas and the completion of drainage ditches to prevent erosion.

#### **Columbia Tailings Site**

Reconfiguration and stabilization of the tailings pile is complete. Remaining work includes revegetation, the construction of drainage ditches and construction of Rico's visitor center facilities.

#### **Santa Cruz Mine**

Work on the rock pile is complete. Drainage ditches remain to be constructed, as well as the wetlands dike and some seeding.

#### **Silver Swan Mine**

Reconfiguration and stabilization of the rock pile is 95% completed. Additional work will include construction of the wetlands dike, erosion protection and revegetation.

#### **Grand View Smelter**

Remediation work is nearly completed. The area must now be revegetated.

#### **Smaller Sites**

Reclamation has been completed at the Shamrock, Pro Patria and Silver Swan East sites with the exception of reseeding.

## **School of Mines Completes St. Louis Tunnel Study**

Water discharging from the St. Louis Mine is not included in the voluntary cleanup program because it is covered by another regulatory process under the auspices of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. However, in order to review the situation at the site, ARCO helped sponsor an independent technical study of the site which was conducted by the **Colorado School of Mines**. This study was designed to provide an independent assessment of the discharge problem and to suggest possible alternatives which might be investigated to technically address any potential problems associated with the site. The study has been completed as part of a Masters of Science thesis by Kathleen Paser, a School of Mines' graduate student. The study and its results will soon be made available to the permit holder and site owner, as well as to State and City of Rico officials for their review and follow up.

### **ARCO Says "Thank You" and ... "Lets Eat!"**

The success of ARCO's voluntary cleanup program has been due in large part to the cooperation of local officials, land owners and Rico residents. As an expression of its gratitude, ARCO is hosting a community barbecue on **Saturday, September 28th - noon to 3:00 pm** at the **Louis M. Jones Memorial Park**.

Come meet those of us who are working on the cleanup project and let us personally say "thanks".



The Court House has been reserved as a  
"bad weather" location

**If you have any questions about the voluntary program, please contact ARCO's Project Administrator *Cynthia Kezos* through the *Rico Community Hotline* at ...  
**1-800-914-4515.****